

FORWARD

DISPUTE RESOLUTION

TRAINING PROGRAM

One of the objectives of FORWARD is to strengthen the institutional capacity for resolving problems and disputes over water issues within the Middle East and Asia region. FORWARD achieves this objective in four ways:

- ? **Assisting local officials in resolving specific problems** – FORWARD dispute resolution specialists use collaborative problem-solving approaches as they work closely with government officials and private individuals to address problems in the water sector. This case-specific activity provides the mentoring opportunity for officials, managers and other decision makers who learn useful knowledge and skills for resolving difficult problems they face in their daily work;
- ? **Helping develop improved methods of dealing with local water issues** – FORWARD uses its case-by-case experience over time to generate improved approaches to collaborative problem solving and consensus building within each context. These improved approaches are then captured in lessons learned and case studies that are used in workshops, mentoring, and other training programs;
- ? **Conducting dispute resolution training for those who handle problems** – FORWARD also builds institutional capacity by offering dispute resolution training programs for public and private-sector decision makers who play an important role in shaping water issues. Improved knowledge and skills in collaborative problem solving are often best gained by a range of instructional methods, including structured workshops, special seminar sessions, and individualized mentoring or coaching on the job; and
- ? **Developing a group of professional mediation experts in the region** – FORWARD identifies those who have the interest and ability to become third-party professionals and provides the specialized, intensive training that prepares these potential mediators to fulfill this new role for their communities. Newly trained mediators and facilitators are encouraged to co-mediate, co-facilitate and co-train with FORWARD personnel on other project activities, thereby gaining valuable experience and encouragement for their new profession.

A. GENERAL APPROACH TO TRAINING

The objective of FORWARD's training program is to build capacity and skills in collaborative problem solving, interest-based negotiation, and consensus decision making so that government officials and other professionals will resolve the difficult water issues that face them as effectively, efficiently, and wisely as possible.

The FORWARD training program for each country describes the training objectives to be achieved, potential participants for training, knowledge and skills to be emphasized, probable trainers, methods of instruction, and a schedule or sequence of training events. FORWARD trainers develop each program based on the results of a general interview process with key government officials and USAID mission staff, and an in-depth training needs assessment conducted with those who are potential participants in the training program. The training program takes into account the special job needs of participants; the requirements of their ministries, agencies, organizations or companies; and the realities of the local environment.

FORWARD offers individually designed training programs for two participant groups: stakeholders – government and private-sector decision makers in the water sector who can use dispute resolution skills in their current jobs, and mediators – managers and other professionals from the public and private sectors who want to develop their knowledge and skills to perform mediation and other third-party work.

All training offered by FORWARD is designed around participant objectives. Through responses during the needs assessment, potential participants in stakeholder or mediator training point to the specific collaborative decision-making or mediating skills they believe can help them do a better job. FORWARD trainers then pull from the theory and approaches central to dispute resolution the concepts that best meet the needs expressed. They also select, jointly with participants, appropriate methods for delivering the training that fit the schedules, job requirements, and cultural setting of the participants. Delivery methods include training workshops, special seminar sessions, and individualized mentoring plans.

Training workshops

Training workshops are experiential in the sense that they rely on the active participation of those attending to be the main channel for learning. Therefore, they include discussion sessions, simulations, role plays, and joint analysis of case studies in addition to short lectures on collaborative approaches to decision making. Simulations have been a very popular part of FORWARD training in the past, serving as one participant in Jordan said “to provide the chance to implement what was given in theory and make use of individuals’ capacities.” Another Jordanian commented that “. . . the exercises give you the opportunity to live the experience.” A stakeholder workshop is typically two days long. Within four or five weeks after each workshop, a trainer will

schedule a meeting with each participant (or with small groups of participants) to revisit lessons learned from the workshop and help perfect new skills.

Special seminar sessions

Participant schedules, the press of work within government agencies, or urgent needs for focused training related to a specific project, may create obstacles to the design of a structured workshop that lasts two consecutive days. In such situations, FORWARD works with participants in shaping specialized sessions that provide the desired training within the limitations imposed. To use an example from mediator training in Egypt, a FORWARD trainer provided special training sessions on interest-based negotiation and mediation through a program that included two sessions, six months apart, each composed of three days, two-hours per day. This design was especially helpful to busy professionals who had already attended several longer, more structured workshops on general dispute resolution.

Individualized Mentoring

FORWARD has several different forms of mentoring in its training program. In the course of regular program activities in the water sector, FORWARD's dispute resolution specialists use collaborative problem-solving approaches as they work with government officials and private individuals to resolve real life problems. This problem-specific activity provides learning opportunities for decision makers that are effectively reinforced by the special mentoring activities of the FORWARD team.

FORWARD may also provide a mentoring program for stakeholders who have special scheduling and work limitations. Although an initial workshop or seminar session experience is advisable, a FORWARD trainer will work individually, or in small groups, with stakeholder participants at their jobs, using real world problems and issues that come across the participant's desk as learning tools.

Dispute Resolution Knowledge and Skills

The FORWARD approach grows out of the interest-based negotiation method of dispute resolution. This method incorporates many important guiding principles: the inclusion of all interested parties in the resolution process; a primary focus on underlying interests (as contrasted with positions); the usefulness of objective criteria and options for joint gain; attention to relationship and communication problems; and recognition of the value of third-party contributions.

Someone using the FORWARD approach will address problems by

- ? Identifying different causes of the problem and their implications;
- ? Applying the basic principles of negotiation, including recognizing and addressing relationship issues

distinguishing interests from positions
developing creative options for resolution
selecting suitable evaluative standards
evaluating the parties' alternatives to negotiation

- ? Understanding consensus-building and collaborative problem-solving principles;
- ? Developing good communication skills, especially listening and interviewing;
- ? Evaluating a series of related problems or disputes, and designing responsive processes; and
- ? Understanding the principles, practice, and benefits of mediation and facilitation.

There exists an expanding body of knowledge and experience in dispute resolution. FORWARD's dispute resolution team, both US-based and in-country, is acquainted with this knowledge and prepared to make it available for application and adjustment to local conditions and contexts.

B. STAKEHOLDER TRAINING PROGRAMS

Stakeholders are key officials, managers, and decision-makers working in the ministries, agencies and other organizations dealing primarily with water issues. They participate in handling difficult problems – working on specific plans and making decisions, jointly or individually, that affect the way the country deals with and resolves its major water problems.

Recent experience has reinforced the recognition that citizens, communities, and governments can achieve their goals in the area of water more effectively by working together with others similarly situated than by each interested party working alone and often against others. The existence of the Middle East Peace Process multilateral negotiations on water issues is just one example of this recognition. The latest progress, however limited, between Jordan and Israel on sharing water resources is another. Successes achieved in managing water in the Danube River basin, and in environmental protection of water resources throughout the U.S. and Canada, have been well-documented and a source for preventing conflict in those regions.

The lesson of this experience is that governments can expect a more effective and workable water sector through a commitment to collaborative approaches to solving problems. Stakeholders in host countries seek a FORWARD training program with that primary objective in mind. More specifically, they want to increase their understanding of the nature of the collaborative process, to be able to distinguish a good from an ineffective process, and to improve their skills for playing a constructive and appropriate role in such a process.

Training Needs Assessment

The foundation for preparing a FORWARD training program is the training needs assessment. A preliminary step for conducting a needs assessment is a series of interviews, discussions, briefings, or focus group sessions with key managers and decision makers in host government ministries and agencies that are involved in water issues, and with local USAID mission staff. The objectives of this effort are:

- ? To link the training program to ongoing technical and collaborative problem-solving efforts by FORWARD in the host country;
- ? To learn their perceptions about dispute resolution and mediation generally and collaborative problem-solving approaches and skills specifically;
- ? To determine the potential role these approaches and skills could play in their organizations;
- ? To identify the potential for mediation, facilitation, or other third-party services within the work of the organization;
- ? To understand the training culture of the organization, and how a FORWARD training program might fit within it;
- ? To encourage key officials to plan how increased use of collaborative processes in the organization's decision making might improve effectiveness and efficiency;
- ? To identify a support network within the ministry or organization that can assist FORWARD trainers in conducting a training needs assessment, selecting likely participants, and developing the training design once a decision is made to proceed; and
- ? To provide opportunities for the ministry or organization and FORWARD (including the local USAID mission staff) to become comfortable with the selection of trainers to carry through the training program.

These preparatory interviews and discussions can be focused and brief, and should be completed within the first week of a training design process. The result is a preliminary outline of what a training program could be, with a detailed set of next steps for conducting specific needs assessment interviews with potential participants.

As a general note, FORWARD prefers to develop its stakeholder training programs at the same time as it prepares for mediator training (see Section C for Training Programs for Mediator Trainees). As key government officials endorse the use of collaborative problem-solving approaches, and more government managers develop an interest in participating in collaborative processes and master the skills to perform well, there will be more demand for mediators, facilitators, and other third-party professionals to help

stakeholders manage the most difficult and complex issues. This increased interest and demand should encourage professionals both in government and the private sector to become practicing mediators. Stakeholder and mediator training programs, once begun, are self-reinforcing. Effective, efficient, and wise resolution of water issues should be the result.

Interviewing Potential Participants

Interviewing stakeholders who are potential training participants is the next step in preparing the FORWARD training program, and should follow immediately after the preparatory discussions with key officials and managers. The objectives of these interviews are:

- ? To discuss the participants' current job responsibilities;
- ? To learn how participants currently reach agreement and solve problems within their organization;
- ? To introduce participants to the possible benefits of collaborative problem-solving knowledge and skills for resolving difficult water issues; and
- ? To determine what knowledge and skills the participants believe would be the most helpful to them in performing their current tasks.

As a related objective, the needs assessment should also build interest among potential participants in collaborative problem solving generally and, more specifically, in attending the training workshop, seminar session, or mentoring program that will be a part of the final training program.

FORWARD trainers interview potential participants, either singly or in focus groups, to gather information on specific training needs. The trainers then use this information to design an interactive training program, which includes participant-centered training objectives, a list of potential participants, general knowledge and skills most needed and useful, probable trainers, methods of instruction, guidelines for supporting materials that reflect as closely as possible the realities of the local context, and a tentative schedule of training events.

Preparing for and conducting participant interviews include the following steps:

1. Identify potential participants

During the general interviews and discussion noted above, government decision makers and key managers will have identified many stakeholders who are potential participants in a training program. Typically, FORWARD is working with key officials in a particular government ministry or agency in the water sector, or group of ministries and agencies, to build a training program that meets their special needs. FORWARD's general

training program will take this specific focus into account, but may also consider broader participation as well. At this point, it is good to remember that the form, content, and format of the training are still undetermined; interviews with potential participants are to help the trainers design the specific shape of the program.

Possible participants should be those who can use the knowledge and skills gained from a FORWARD training workshop or seminar session, or benefit from mentoring, to perform their jobs better and thus contribute to the wise resolution of water issues in their country. They could include:

- ? Managers who have already had some collaborative problem-solving training;
- ? Individuals recommended by ministry or agency officials, or department heads;
- ? Those expressing interest in collaborative processes through other activities, including participation in other FORWARD activities; and
- ? Those from other organizations, both in the public and private sectors, who could benefit from learning these skills and help create a better learning environment for all participants.

2. Select those to interview

With the list of potential participants, FORWARD will work with officials of the government ministry or agency and the mission to select those potential participants to be interviewed. Several considerations may be important in making the selection:

- ? Those recommended for interview by the government or mission
- ? Those whose jobs permit them to be available for interview at the time
- ? A need to have a cross-section of the potential audience
 - Men/women
 - More senior/mid-level or less experienced
 - Public/private
 - Policy/technical
- ? Those who individually express interest in training or collaborative problem solving generally

3. Conduct interviews or focus group

Trainers prepare an outline for an interview or focus group. The following is a draft interview outline that serves as a useful guide:

a. Introduction

Provide a brief overview of the purpose of the interview, define dispute resolution and what we mean by collaborative problem-solving approaches, and explain why the person has been chosen to be interviewed.

b. Questions for Stakeholders

The following are examples of the questions that a trainer might ask in order to elicit the desired information.

- ? What is your job? What do you do on a day-to-day basis?
- ? Who do you work with, both inside and outside your department and agency? What is your relationship with them?
- ? Are you involved in situations where you must gain agreement from a number of individuals in order to implement an activity or program? Please explain by giving one or more examples.

How did it arise? When did you get involved? Who was included in the process of trying to resolve it? Was the issue resolved? If so, how was it resolved? Was the solution workable? Sustainable? What were the end results? Were you satisfied with your participation in that process? What did you learn from your experience?

- ? In your opinion, what training could help you do a better job of handling difficult issues or resolving problems related to your job?
- ? What other comments, questions, or suggestions do you have about your needs related to collaborative problem solving, or the proposed training program?

4. Compile data from interviews

As the interviews proceed, FORWARD trainers compile the results in ways that will be useful for analysis in designing the training program. The entire interview process should not take longer than one-to-two weeks, depending largely on the number of trainers doing the interviews and the availability and location of potential participants. A good needs assessment requires enough interviews – between 15 and 25 interviews in most cases – to provide the trainers with sufficient detail and variety of perspectives to design the training program.

Training Program Design

FORWARD trainers use the interview results to confirm and revise the training program outline initially prepared after the general discussion with ministry and mission officials, and to design a detailed training program. The participant interviews are especially helpful to trainers in:

- ? Identifying the collaborative problem-solving concepts and skills needed to support participants in their jobs;

- ? Developing participant-centered objectives for the training program, and the results or outcomes expected;
- ? Capturing descriptions of common problem-solving issues or disputes facing the interviewees to use for case studies, simulation exercises, or as examples to highlight lessons in the short lectures; and
- ? Identifying information about participant schedules, job requirements, and personal preferences to prepare logistical support for desired training workshops, seminar sessions, or mentoring.

The trainers develop learner-centered objectives and the specific topic areas to be covered in the proposed workshops, seminar sessions, or mentoring. From these objectives and topic areas, the trainers prepare the training program design. This design is then presented to the host government and mission staff for their review, feedback and approval.

The interview results are also used to prepare materials to support the training program. The materials may include hypothetical situations, case studies, simulations, role plays, discussion questions, or other educational documents. Each document is prepared in both Arabic and English for use by trainers and participants. From these materials, the trainers responsible for delivering the training prepare a detailed participant training manual to be used in the workshop, seminar session, or mentoring program. Appropriate supplemental reading material and bibliography are selected and inserted in the manuals for the reference use of participants. The trainers also prepare an evaluation instrument for use at the end of the workshop, special session or mentoring program to capture participant suggestions to help improve training programs in the future.

At regular intervals during the design process, FORWARD trainers review the status of the training design with key decision makers, managers, and potential participants, including those interviewees who were particularly interested in being included in the preparation process. This consultation process not only helps trainers produce a more relevant and useful training, but also stimulates interest among potential participants to increase the participation rate.

It is important to note at this point that the training needs assessment is conducted to design a general training program for the country. The interview results will be sufficient to prepare for most FORWARD workshops, seminar sessions, and mentoring during the period of the project. If, after the preparation and implementation of the initial training program, the government or mission request that FORWARD expand its training to new ministries, agencies or organizations, or to new issue areas, FORWARD will need to conduct additional interviews and design an addendum to the training program.

As the date for each training workshop or seminar session approaches, trainers take care of necessary logistical arrangements, such as attendance or participation,

invitations, transportation, room location and setup, preparation and distribution of training materials, agenda and supplies.

Implementation

The design process produces a clear agenda and schedule for conducting the training program. FORWARD trainers implement this program design in ways that both honor the integrity of the preparatory work and remain sufficiently flexible to adapt to changing conditions or the requests of participants.

Implementation of training workshops includes not only the two-day workshop itself, but also the individual or focus group mentoring that occurs during the following four or five weeks. Special seminar sessions will typically be stand-alone events because of their specialized topics in support of individual activities. A mentoring or coaching program may be planned for an extended period, but even in this case it will normally not go beyond two or three months.

Follow-up

In the final analysis, the effectiveness of a FORWARD training program is measured by the extent to which it helps participants and their governments achieve the overall objective – to build capacity and skills in collaborative problem solving and dispute resolution in ways that improve how the government deals with and resolves difficult water issues.

After concluding its training program, therefore, FORWARD conducts an evaluation of the impact of the training on the actions of participants and their organizations. This evaluation is different from the training evaluation instrument, which records the immediate comments, opinions, and suggestions of participants on the training program itself – what went well and what could be improved. The follow-up evaluation looks at the actions of stakeholder participants and their organizations after the training to determine whether holding the training has had any impact on the way difficult water issues are handled or resolved. FORWARD relies on interviews and focus group sessions with participants and their managers as the means for determining this impact.

C. TRAINING PROGRAMS FOR MEDIATOR TRAINEES

The objective of FORWARD's training component is to build capacity and skills in collaborative problem solving so that host governments can resolve water issues in the most effective way possible. An important part of the capacity for collaborative problem solving is the existence of a group of highly trained mediators or facilitators, experienced in the local environment, who can be invited by government or the private sector to intervene as third parties to help resolve difficult and complex water problems.

A significant part of FORWARD's training program, therefore, is its training for selected government officials and private sector professionals in the knowledge and skills of serving as mediators, facilitators, or third-party intervenors. Mediation training consists of formal training through intensive workshops on interest-based negotiation and collaborative problem solving; opportunities to co-mediate or co-facilitate on existing FORWARD activities; and continuing special seminar sessions with colleagues on lessons learned from their experiences. The result of this training should be the existence of a small group of highly trained third-party practitioners, fully integrated with the local environment and having experience in at least one or more real problems or disputes. Members of this group will be available to provide mediation or facilitation services on difficult water problems, as needed, upon invitation by the host government and/or other parties.

Mediator trainees are officials, managers, and other professionals in the public and private sectors who want to perform mediation, facilitation, or other third-party work in a professional capacity. They seek to strengthen their formal knowledge in interest-based negotiation and collaborative problem-solving approaches; improve their listening, communication and facilitation skills; and develop confidence in their ability to handle difficult people and problems in a mediation setting.

Becoming an accomplished mediator requires mentoring and experience as well as formal training. To provide the experiential learning, FORWARD pairs mediator trainees with more skilled and experienced mediators and facilitators on existing FORWARD activities (for example, preparing situation analyses and convening reports, facilitating working groups and policy dialogues, and co-mediating disputes between agencies).

In addition, mediators learn from sharing experiences with other mediators. In this context, FORWARD will facilitate the periodic meeting of local mediators to discuss case studies, learn new techniques that have been successful in the local environment, and otherwise expand their understanding of the field. Mediators who are prepared and available to serve are a valuable resource for the host government in helping resolve difficult problems.

Training Needs Assessment Process

The first step in designing a training program for mediator trainees is a training needs assessment process similar to that conducted for stakeholder training (see Section B).

The same series of interviews, discussions or focus group sessions with key managers and decision makers forms the foundation for this process, and is done at the same time as the stakeholder program is being developed. As explained above, FORWARD prefers to develop its programs for mediator training at the same time as it prepares its stakeholder training.

The objectives for these interviews and discussions include those listed under the first step in the training needs assessment process for stakeholders (see Section B), as well as the following goals specifically relevant to mediators:

- ? To learn their perceptions about the role of a mediator or facilitator within the local context, especially on matters involving environmental and water issues;
- ? To identify existing third-party work, including specific examples of mediation, facilitation, or other processes performed in the water issue area;
- ? To encourage key government officials and private managers to consider third-party work (mediation and facilitation) as a way of handling difficult problems or disputes; and
- ? To identify potential candidates for mediator training and determine their openness to being local third-party mediators or facilitators in a collaborative problem-solving process.

The result of the initial interviews is a general outline of a mediation training program for the country, with a set of next steps for conducting interviews with potential mediator candidates.

In many ways, a needs assessment for mediation training is similar in objective and design to that conducted for stakeholder training. Objectives include learning what potential trainees are doing in their present jobs; what training and experience they have had that prepares them for third-party practice; how the local government, economy, and culture might support mediation or facilitation work; and what knowledge and skills they believe they need in order to perform as effective third-party professionals.

Interviewing Potential Mediators

Interviewing potential mediators is the next step in preparing a mediator training program that is designed to meet the specific needs of mediator trainees, the demands of government and the private sector for third-party assistance, and the realities of the local environment. The interview process includes the following steps:

1. Identify potential participants in mediation training

A major task is to identify those managers or other professionals who have an interest in performing third-party work in a professional capacity. The search is aided by combining the needs assessment process for mediator training with that of stakeholder training. In addition, FORWARD has already worked with local government and private professionals who may have expressed an interest in serving in a third-party capacity.

Good potential candidates for mediator training do not fall into a single mold, but can have quite different professional education, background and experience, and current position. They can come from government, the private sector, or a combination of the two. For example, in Egypt FORWARD has already worked with seven potential mediators who represent diverse education, experience, and current professional standing: retired military general officer and program director for a private research center; professor of psychiatry; practicing psychiatrist specializing in group therapy; professor of labor management relations and former government employee; and professor of political science at a regional university.

Some common criteria for identifying and selecting potential participants are:

- ? Interest in interest-based negotiation and collaborative problem-solving approaches;
- ? Strong professional interest in performing as a third party;
- ? Visible talent for good communication and listening skills;
- ? Promise in building credibility as a third party in the local context; and
- ? Willingness to commit time to learn interest-based negotiation and mediation skills.

2. Conduct needs assessment interviews

FORWARD trainers then interview each potential participant who is identified. Trainers prepare an outline for an interview in the same manner as they do for a stakeholder interview (see Section B, item 3 under stakeholder training needs assessment). A trainer will ask additional questions of potential mediators – questions that are relevant to third-party practice. The following are examples of questions that a trainer might ask in order to elicit the desired information.

- ? What is your job? What do you do on a day-to-day basis?
- ? What are your perceptions of collaborative problem-solving, interest-based negotiation or mediation? Do these concepts and activities interest you? Do you have opportunities to participate in collaborative decision making in your daily work? In what way? Please give an example.
- ? What roles do you see a professional mediator or third party playing? In your opinion, what skills or experience do you have that will assist you in becoming effective in this role?
- ? What training or experience have you had in facilitation, mediation, or other third-party activities?

- ? In your opinion, what knowledge, skills, or experience are important for you to acquire to be able to perform effectively as a third party?

3. Compile data from interviews

FORWARD trainers compile the results of the interviews in much the same manner as with stakeholder training (see Section B, item 4 under stakeholder training needs assessment). The interview process should be completed within one week, since the number of potential mediators will not normally exceed 12 to 15 people.

Training Program Design

Based on the analysis of the interviews, FORWARD trainers design a mediator training program that can produce a group of highly trained mediators with experience in at least one or two local FORWARD activities by the end of the project period. The program includes learner-centered objectives; specific topic areas to be covered in the proposed workshops and seminar sessions; a list of potential participants; probable trainers; proposed co-mediation or co-facilitation opportunities for those who have attended the workshop and seminar sessions; and a tentative schedule of training events. This mediator training program is then presented to the host government and mission staff for their review, feedback, and approval.

Because the number of potential mediators in each host country is normally small, FORWARD intends to combine the training workshops and seminar sessions for trainees from neighboring countries in the region. This joint, international effort is more cost effective, creates a more varied and dynamic learning environment, and may be more exciting for the participants.

FORWARD trainers develop relevant training materials in the same manner as with stakeholder training, although these materials will include more advanced discussion of interest-based negotiation principles and collaborative problem-solving approaches. Useful reference materials, preferably in Arabic, are emphasized because these training materials will be good reference documents for newly trained mediators as they gain experience as co-mediators and co-trainers on other FORWARD activities. Training manuals will include an evaluation instrument asking the participant to assess the quality and relevance of the training program, although trainers will also use verbal evaluation tools at different times during the program as important sources for participant feedback.

As with stakeholder training, FORWARD trainers review at regular intervals the status of the training design and logistics with key decision makers and potential participants. Logistical arrangements will be made as plans for the training program are approved.

Implementation

Because this training is preparing the participant for a new profession, implementation often occurs over a long period of time, typically months or a year or more. The program will usually involve all three types of training – workshops, seminar sessions and mentoring – and will have a natural sequencing or flow to the development of the knowledge and skills needed to perform as an independent and effective third-party professional.

After receiving intensive formal training in mediation, and as an integral part of the training program, newly trained mediators are invited to co-mediate, co-facilitate, or co-train with FORWARD specialists on other project activities. They can thereby gain valuable experience and build credibility and a good reputation in their new profession. Under special circumstances, co-mediation experience may also be provided through separate FORWARD mentoring on other third-party work.

Follow-Up

The measure of effectiveness of the FORWARD mediation training program is whether it has contributed to building a group of qualified mediation professionals who are prepared and available to provide third-party collaborative problem-solving services to local government and private sector organizations to help resolve difficult water problems.

An evaluation of the program, therefore, consists at least in part in determining the existence of such a group of qualified and experienced mediators. As part of its follow-up evaluation, FORWARD will confirm the members of the group, the qualifications and training of each, what experience each received on project activities (as well as on other outside tasks); the results of those co-mediation efforts; and assessments each received from the FORWARD specialist on the work they did. Although more difficult to determine, FORWARD will also try to evaluate the impact of the existence of this group, and by implication the impact of mediator training, on stakeholder and government actions in support of collaborative problem solving. This impact is reflected in part in the number of independent requests for third-party assistance from the government or private sector.